

Saint Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church

110 Main Street

Haverhill, MA

1999 Annual Parish Assembly Minutes

February 7, 1999

The 1998 Annual Parish Assembly was held on Sunday, February 7, 1999. Parish Council Chairperson, Albert Movsesian, called the meeting to order at 12:45 PM EST.

1. Opening Prayer

Albert Movsesian, Parish Council Chairperson, led opening prayer.

George Chakoian was introduced as a representative from the Dioceses.

2. Quorum

Quorum Established: 72 dues paying members, 28 present at Assembly

3. Election of Assembly Chairperson and Secretary

Chairperson of the Assembly: Steve Arthur

Secretary of the Assembly: Janice Mosesian

4. Minutes of the 1998 Parish Assembly and Special Assemblies

Motion accepted to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

Motion to accept the minutes as submitted passed.

5. Report of the Nominating Committee

Sylvia Tavitian chairperson of the Nominating Committee met with her committee and established the names of individuals that were willing to have their names on the nomination ballot. She had trouble getting enough names. There were supposed to be 8 names submitted for Parish Council, but was only able to obtain 3 names. This was a point of discussion since according to the bylaws it is necessary to have twice the number of names for nominees. We need to get approval from the Diocese for this.

6. Nominations for:

a. Parish Council Members (4)

- Harry Alexanian
- Sevan Demirdogen
- Robert Serabian

There were several nominations from the floor, but each declined, except for:

- Charles Loosian

Motion to close Parish Council nominations by Albert Movsesian, seconded Richard McNeil.

Motion to accept only 4 persons slated for 8 positions by Barbara Arthur, motion seconded, majority voted in favor of accepting.

b. Nominating Committee Members (3)

- Joyce Alexanian
- Barbara Arthur
- Janice Mosesian
- Sylvia Tavitian

Nominated from the floor for nominating committee:

- Azaduhi Loosian motion, seconded
- Liz Derderian motion, seconded
- c. Auditing Committee Members (2)**
 - Martin Aaronian – still serving current term
 - Richard Serabian

There were a number of nominations from the floor for Auditing Committee, many of which declined, except for:

- Joseph Tavitian
- Pauline Harian

7. Annual Report from Visiting Pastor

Read by Albert Movsesian

Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Maksoudian is not able to be with us today, due to illness. Very Rev. Fr. Krikor has been doing an outstanding job, giving superb and common sense sermons.

8. Annual Report of Parish Council

Read by Albert Movsesian

- Parish House value is currently valued at approx. \$150,000.00. The house is currently being rented, the new tenant is improving the house he pays 650.00 + utilities.
- Church Lawn cutting program has saved the Church approx. \$800.00/year.
- Choir members were thanked for their dedication.
- Lenten Dinners were very successful, we plan to have them again
- We put a sign on the black post in the corner out front of the Church. The Merajanian family contributed to most of the cost of the sign.

- The Ladies Aid Society is the backbone of the Church and always has been we could not do anything without them.
- Annual picnic was successful. June 20, 1999 will be our picnic date this year.
- Church Auction was successful, extra items were donated to Ruth's House. This function was a group effort. People came forward with really great stuff for the auction. We need to attract non-Armenians to the auction to be successful.
- Bazaar was also successful. We plan on having another bazaar this year.
- Church side door was added for \$3,000.00, Jim Derderian donated the door.
- Everyone was thanked for helping in some way to "Keep the doors open".
- The Choir entrance steps were repaired.
- The steeple door was fixed to keep the animals out. We hope this year someone will fix and repair the steeple itself, still needs to be fixed at an approx. cost of \$180,000.00.
- Financially, we are in good shape; we have money in the bank. We are only successful when we have an event. We have to bring back the group that left the Church back in April 1996.
- Albert Movsesian has worked very hard to maintain the Church. He and others have the time, energy, and the devotion. Everyone needs to help. There is a heavy burden on a few members of the Parish Council who get tired and frustrated. The next generation, 30 and 40 year olds, need to take on the responsibility of the Church.
- Our Church is being submitted to be on the National Historical Register.
- The kitchen hood ducts were cleaned out so there is no longer a hazard.

- Albert Movsesian checked on the assessed value. The title of the property is the Diocese of the Armenian Church in New York. The Church is assessed at \$327,000.00, and the land next door: \$105,000.00, the parish house owned by St. Gregory's: estimate is approx. \$150,000.00
- The Diocesan dues are behind – this will be addressed later on this afternoon.

9. Annual Report of the Diocesan Delegate

Paul Tavitian suggested that the reports be sent to people's homes 2 weeks in advance of the Assembly Meeting for them to review beforehand.

10. Report of Parish Committees/Organizations

These reports were included in the package that was handed out.

- Ladies Aid Society Financial Report. Motion to accept the report, seconded, accepted.
- Sunday School – We have a very strong Sunday school, on a given Sunday, we have more children downstairs, than we have parishioners upstairs. Motion to accept the report, seconded, accepted.
- Pacesetters Report by Harry Alexanian. Pacesetters are a social group of the Church, which will take us into the future. There was a dance last year that was put together was a great thing and we hope will be an annual even. We have a trip to Ellis Island. Robert Serabian said a few words about the trip, which is scheduled for 5/15/1999. Motion to accept the report, seconded, accepted.
- Mr. & Mrs. Club Report Motion to accept was seconded and accepted.
Remarks from Harry Kasparian the Church Treasurer spoke:

The Church did well financially for several reasons:

- No priest related expenses
- Parish House has been rented. We will continue to rent for another year
- The utilities have all been reduced since the renter is paying for them, except for the water
- Our budget for 1999 should also show a gain
- Dues owed to the Dioceses are in arrears since 1997. The 1999 dues have been reduced since we do not have a priest
- Our membership is declining. We need to do something about that. A plan will be sent to the diocese will be given as to how we will pay our dues monthly over 12 months. By January 1, 2003, our diocesan dues will be paid up

Remarks from Jim Derderian:

About 3 years ago we had as much as 132 members in the Church. At this time we have 72 members. What does that say? He has been on the parish council for a while. The Diocese could be more helpful and responsible. We asked for for Primate to visit us and for help in paying our dues. We would like to know what the Diocese doing to help us This information has to be given to the Dioceses. This Church has been in a declining situation; financial, membership, and moral. If the Dioceses are going to do something, they have to help by propping us up. We would like the Diocese to start paying attention to small parishes such as ours

Harry Kasparian:

In terms of the assets, the Diocese owns the Church, but we have been paying for the capital improvements.

Remarks by Sue Kezerian:

We have been here for many years, we do not want to see the Church doors closed. There were periods where we were not getting help. We need somebody here to help re-establish the parish. Without a Church leader, there will not be a Church. Volunteers are strong, but we need someone here to promote. We hope the Diocese is listening. We see other Churches being helped and we want to make sure that there is something in our future.

Merger Committee Report by Steve Arthur

We did make an offer on a property, but we withdraw it. The committee has been semi-active, some due to illness. Progress is now at a standstill. Our parish is trying to rely on somebody else to do something else for us. If we expect anything to happen in this Church, we need our own membership to do something. The responsibility is really on us. The problem is us. We have to be here, join here, and work here. "We" includes the people that are not here. The Diocese will not solve our problems here, it is what has happened in the past and what will happen in the future.

Remarks from Harry Kasparian:

We don't have the parents or the children to draw the community together. We need a leader.

Remarks from Paul Tavitian:

Paul Tavitian agrees with Harry 100%, that if you want to get something done, we have to do it ourselves. He has attended different functions for the Dioceses, they have their own problems. There are Churches, like ours throughout the country. We have to do things ourselves. We hope they

have enough priests and deacons in charge to help us out. But do not expect more from the diocese.

Motion to accept the 1998 budget by Jim Derderian, seconded by Harry Alexanian. No discussion. Majority voted in favor. The motion was carried. The budget is accepted for 1998, and accepted for 1999.

Skipped over Historical Committee Report since it was alluded to earlier by Albert Movsesian.

11. Old Business

Can the Parish council investigate the heating system expenses. Would like to see a new heating system put in. The old one is steam and is prone to failure.

12. New Business

a. Reducing the Number of Parish Council Members from 9 to 7

Vote to reduce the existing 9 to 7. Back in 1995, when there were 128 people here, a vote was passed to increase the number of parish council members from 7 to 9. We have only minimum quorums. Would take effect in the year 2000 (not in 1999). We would like to go back to 7, speaking as a committee member, we do not need 9, 7 would be fine.

Paul Tavitian is against because

Jim Derderian based on the 72 paid dues member, advocated for.

b. Membership Development

Remarks by Harry Alexanian on:

- people who have left the Church

- people who are not and never have been active
- reaching out to new members

After last summer's newsletter was sent, they called people and asked what they thought. Our situation here in Haverhill, is a lot like the following: Small bands of Armenians protect something. When people look back they will look at a small group of Armenians who kept together in adverse times.

Results of the Various Elections:

Parish Council Members

Harry Alexanian

Sevan Demirdogen

Robert Serabian

Charles Loosian

Nominating Committee

Barbara Arthur

Liz Derderian

Sylvia Tavitian

Auditing Committee

Richard Serabian

Pauline Harian

Other New Business

There was some discussion around the status of the Church computer, what condition is it in, and who uses it. It is not Y2K compatible. The computer itself, the hardware is not bad, but the software is not common. So it is difficult to use it. It is a 386 computer. Some people are looking

at it. It can be replaced for 700-800. It is easier to replace than to upgrade.
Fax machine is new.

13. Diocesan Council Observer

Remarks from George Chakoian:

He liked what he heard from Harry and Al, around the need to “take the bull by the horns”.

Think about the ideas and issues to discuss with the Diocese, then address in a letter to the Primate and Chairperson so that it will be read. Tell us how we can help you. For example, invite Diocesan members to a meeting. The Primate may not come up, but the Clergy or Layman could come up. If you have ideas, please write them down and send to us.

We cannot forgive a Diocesan assessment. There are so many parishes in arrears, we would have to do that for everyone. So we can work out a plan to pay over time. Houston, etc. has been done for Churches with financial assessments. The only way to reduce the assessment is to reduce the membership.

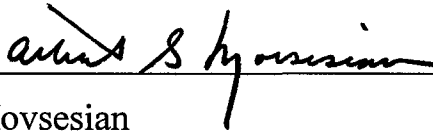
This meeting is no different from any other meeting. Providence for example, also has problems finding Parish Council members.

14. Closing Prayer

Charlie Loosian led the closing prayer.

The Annual Parish Assembly meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM EST.

Respectfully Submitted,



Albert Movsesian

Parish Council Chairperson



Steve Arthur

Parish Assembly Chairperson



Janice Mosesian

Parish Assembly Secretary